



orangethroat darter

Etheostoma spectabile

Kingdom:	Animalia
Division/Phylum:	Chordata - vertebrates
Class:	Osteichthyes
Order:	Perciformes
Family:	Percidae

Features

The orangethroat darter grows to an average length of one to two inches and may attain a maximum length of about three inches. There are two dorsal fins, the first with spines. The back is arched and the lateral line (sensory organ on the side of the fish) is incomplete. It has dark bars (blue on the male, brown on the female) on the sides. The body has a green-brown back and a white to orange belly. The dorsal and tail fins are red with a blue edge. Large males have a blue anal fin, a blue or black pelvic fin, and two orange spots on the base of the tail. There is a thin teardrop mark under the eye.

Natural History

The orangethroat darter is threatened in Iowa. It lives in creeks and rivers with a gravel or rock bottom and no silt. It lives near the bottom. It eats crustaceans, fish eggs, and insects. It reaches maturity at an age of two years. Spawning occurs in April with the female depositing eggs on gravel riffles. Eggs hatch in nine

to ten days. The orangethroat darter has an average life span of eight years.

Habitats

interior rivers and streams

Iowa Status

threatened; native

Iowa is on the edge of the orangethroat darter's range. It is more abundant further south.

Iowa Range

southeast Iowa

Bibliography

Iowa Department of Natural Resources. 2001.
Biodiversity of Iowa: Aquatic Habitats CD-ROM.